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ALSO FOR NEA/ELA  
DOL/ILAB FOR TINA MCCARTER

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EIND](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [USAID](#) [PREL](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR: UPDATE

REF: A. STATE 184972 B. 05 AMMAN 06925

1. (SBU) In response to ref A, Post has contacted appropriate ministries and NGOs in order to update Ref B reporting on the worst forms of child labor in Jordan, and the efforts in place to combat them. The bulk of the information reported in Ref b remains accurate, and the worst forms of child labor, as defined in ILO convention 182, are rare in Jordan. Following is updated information on current initiatives to combat child labor in Jordan, grouped by the source organization and subject:

2. (U) IRC: The Information and Resource Center (IRC) of the King Hussein Foundation was originally established by Queen Noor in 1995 as the National Task Force for Children. The IRC has been conducting research on child labor for over one year. In 2004, with funding from the Swiss Embassy in Amman, the IRC undertook an effort focused on street children in Irbid, a large city in northern Jordan, with a goal of expanding the effort to areas of Amman. As of yet, there are no published results.

3. (U) Questscope: UK-based Questscope, in coordination with the Ministries of Labor (MOL), Education (MOE), and Social Development (MoSD), implemented four projects aimed at eliminating child labor. All four focus on underprivileged children and those detained at juvenile centers.

-- The first project provides adult mentors for "at-risk" youth. The mentor and child meet weekly for one-on-one activities, and groups of mentors and children regularly go on recreational outings or meet for educational activities. The project considers each child's experience and specific needs in partnering with organizations whose resources match individual cases. The World Bank funded the mentoring program until April 2005. The program is still operating, though in a scaled-back manner, while Questscope seeks additional funding.

-- The second project is dubbed "Earn & Learn." Citing statistics that suggest some children provide 40% of their families' income, often through menial work and potentially dangerous jobs, the project aims to teach them vocational skills to help them attain higher grades of employment. The children start by participating in informal education classes after normal working hours to earn a diploma from the MOE. Those that earn the diploma are guaranteed one year of vocational training. The Earn & Learn project is funded by the European Union and sponsored by the MOE. Currently, 200 dropouts are taking part in the education classes, and there are ten vocational training centers set up for the graduates.

Jordan's Development and Employment Fund provides microfinance assistance to participants, enabling them to start their own businesses.

-- The third project is similar to the "Earn and Learn" program. "Educating Dropouts" is a 24-month informal education program for students who have dropped out of high school. Implemented in September 2006, 10 schools and 31 teachers are involved in the program, which offers courses in six core areas (English, Arabic, Religion, Math, Sciences, and Social Skills), provides a certificate that is the equivalent of a high school degree, and which enables the students to enroll in specialized vocational courses.

-- The fourth project is a partnership initiative with the Greater Amman Municipality in which four charitable societies have opened their spaces to offer classes for underprivileged children. The Municipality offers funding, and the classes are for children who have been truant for 6-8 months or who are considered "drop-outs".

14. (SBU) The National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA): The NCFA was established by royal decree, and started official operations in 2001. In November 2006, the NCFA in conjunction with the Ministry of Labor (MOL) announced a new National Strategy to combat child labor. They are currently drafting an Action Plan, which they expect to release in January 2007. Also in January, they plan to publish a report on Child Labor in Jordan, which they have researched with UNICEF. The NCFA shares the original mandate of the National Task Force for Children to advance the interests of Jordanian youth. The NCFA, however, has the expanded goal of ensuring a better life for Jordanian families. The NCFA is quasi-governmental, and provides policy recommendations and advocacy. It also facilitates coordination between the GOJ

and the NGO community. The issue of child labor falls under the responsibility of the Childhood Unit at the NCFA, and it has worked hand in hand with Questscope on both the mentoring and Earn & Learn projects.

15. (U) Ministry of Labor (MOL): In November 2006, the MOL and the NCFA launched a National Strategy on Child Labor in Jordan, and established a committee to combat child labor consisting of representatives from the Ministries of Labor, Education, and Planning as well as the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR). Among its recommendations: that the Ministry of Interior enhance the Penal Code and the 2006 Juvenile Code to criminalize begging by children under age 16, and to change the rules governing the assistance given to poor families from the National Aid Fund by the Ministry of Social Development. The National Agenda for reform (published in January, 2006) has set aside 500,000 JD for 2007 to tackle the problem of child labor, and plans to hire labor inspectors (with authority to arrest) to inspect work places, and to take 16-18 year olds to Vocational Training Centers that offer free training courses.

16. (SBU) International Labor Organization (ILO): In January 2004, the MOL announced a US\$1 million ILO project to combat child labor in Jordan. The project was to be implemented in coordination with the MOE and MoSD, and aimed to rehabilitate working children under 18 years of age, sending them back to school while helping their families to earn a living. The project set the lofty goal of benefiting 500 families within three years. To date, this project has barely gotten off the ground. The current ILO administrator says that her predecessor had trouble organizing the project, but that work on a rehabilitation center is ongoing. At the end of 2005, the ILO inaugurated the National Program to Eliminate Child Labor in Jordan. This program is operated in conjunction with the Ministries of Labor, Education, Social Development, and Industry and Commerce, as well as the Jordan Chamber of Industry, the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions, and the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development. Currently there are two schools operating under the program, which teaches, in addition to general education, English and computer skills. The school for girls is in Zarqa and the

school for boys is in Sahab. The ILO has also worked closely with Questscope in Zarqa on the "Educating Drop-outs" program.

¶17. (U) SCREAM - Stop Child Labor: The Ministry of Labor's Child Labor Unit (CLU) initiated this ILO-IPEC (International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor) program to raise the awareness of young people about child labor. NOTE: According to a 2002 CLU study, 32,000 children are working throughout Jordan. END NOTE. The program consists of 14 modules in arts, education, and media. It conducted its first workshop in June 2004 to train 38 educators and volunteers on child labor and its negative consequences. Since then, it has conducted subsequent workshops at public universities in Jordan. The CLU is now working on an initiative to introduce the SCREAM modules in private universities, with the goal of incorporating them in a formal degree program on child protection studies.

¶18. (U) Pending Legislation: Jordan has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and it was endorsed by Parliament in October 2006. A new draft bill on Child's Rights, Development and Protection is on the agenda for the current session of Parliament. In 2003, King Abdullah issued a royal decree increasing the minimum age of workers to 18, and the Ministry of Labor has issued instructions to its inspectors to enforce this change. Jordan has ratified ILO convention 138 which raises the minimum working age to 18, and ILO Convention 182, which calls for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.

¶19. (SBU) The National Center for Human Rights (NCHR), the NCFA, and UNICEF are jointly working on addressing child labor on two fronts: through the pending child rights law, and by amending current laws. Current labor law does provide some measure of protection for working children. It limits the workday of a minor (defined as under 18) to six hours, and provides for a one-hour break after four continuous hours of work. Also, working hours for children must be between 6:00am and 8:00pm. In practice, this law is not always strictly observed. The same 2002 CLU report revealed that 19 percent of children worked at least 10-hour days.

¶10. (SBU) The street scene: Child beggars are present on some streets in Amman. Some of these children are reportedly forced to beg by their parents. While there is no empirical evidence of sexual abuse, there are suspicions among the NGO community that this does occur, however infrequently. These children are vulnerable to exploitation, both by their families and by those who seek to employ them. The Ministry of Social Development's (MoSD) anti-vagrancy campaign works to detain and investigate the child beggars, and to prosecute those who exploit them. According to the MoSD, on average 20 child beggars are rounded up daily. Detained children must be picked up by a parent or guardian. However, there is currently no fine or penalty assessed against the parents. Consequently, there is no financial incentive for families to keep their children from returning to the street. A USAID-funded short-term assessment team has also discovered instances of children working in textile factories in the Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs).

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